



The Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development

New initiatives of Education Policy in the Context of Civil Integration

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SUMMARY

Since the end of 2009, a number of significant initiatives have been introduced or revived in the Georgian education system. Each initiative introduced by the Ministry of Education and Science is important for improving the quality of education, though these initiatives carry risks which, if disregarded, might jeopardize the achievement of goals set by education policymakers and even yield the reverse results and damage the quality of education.

The aim of this paper is to present an overview of the initiatives in the education system in the context of civil integration since the end of 2009. The first part of the paper is focused on the policies of: establishing special privileges for minorities in National Standardized University Entrance Examinations, introducing Final School Examinations, changes in school curricula and text books, certification and professional development of teachers. Risks associated with these initiatives – most of which concern non-Georgian-language general education institutions – will be discussed in the second part of the paper, while the third part will formulate recommendations for evading and countering the risks and threats presented in the second part.

**Policy
Paper
2010**

Introduction

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New initiatives of the Ministry of Education and Science

Since the end of 2009, the Ministry of Education and Science has introduced a number of initiatives and published the document “Challenges and Initiatives of the Ministry of Education and Science 2010-2011”. The new initiatives are directed towards (a) establishing 12 per cent quotas for minorities in the National Standardized University Entrance Examinations; (b) attaching greater importance to the high-school diploma and introducing final school examinations from 2011; (c) ensuring greater attendance in elementary and secondary schools; (d) developing and improving the national curriculum; (e) improving the quality of text books; (f) development and implementation of the “safe school” concept; (g) fostering the professional development of teachers, elevating their qualification and cer-

tifying them; (h) active involvement of local self-government bodies in the education process; (i) improving infrastructure; (j) improving coordination between the Education Ministry, resource centres and schools; (k) strengthening Georgian language teaching among the non-Georgian speaking population; (l) creating greater opportunities for educating special needs children.

All the above-mentioned initiatives will to some extent improve the quality of education in non-Georgian schools, though some of these directions are particularly significant for representatives of ethnic minorities. Also it is important to bear in mind that a number of those initiatives are presented in very broad and general terms and the Ministry of Education and Science is still working on them, and it is difficult to analyse them at this initial stage. Accordingly, this paper will look at the initiatives which are more or less elaborated and analysable and which are the most important in respect to the non-Georgian speaking population. In particular, the paper will present an overview of: (1) the policy of providing privileges to ethnic minorities in the National Standardized University Entrance Exams; (2) the policy of teachers certification and professional development; (3) the policy of attaching greater importance to the high school diploma and introducing final examinations; (4) initiatives for improving the national curriculum and introducing new programmes, increasing the proportion of use of the Georgian language in the textbooks for non-Georgian schools.

Policy of providing privileges to ethnic minorities in National Standardized University Entrance Exams

Difficulties faced by non-Georgian speaking pupils applying to universities and taking the national entrance exams are among the most sensitive issues facing Georgia's education system. Since 2005 a number of steps have been taken to overcome these difficulties. Most of these activities involved preparatory courses for non-Georgian speaking high school students provided by the Education Ministry, higher education institutions and/or NGOs. The problem was not overcome despite these

efforts, and it was decided to grant ethnic minorities privileges in the entrance exams in 2010. This initiative is aimed at providing greater opportunities for Georgian citizens who take the tests in the Azeri, Armenian, Abkhaz and Ossetian languages to receive higher education; empowering them with necessary skills and knowledge to continue their studies in the Georgian language and integrate into Georgian society.

In November 2009, 19 amendments to the Law on Higher Education specified the number of students participating in preparatory courses in the Georgian language and established quotas of reserved seats for students applying to higher education institutions and taking general skills examinations in the Azeri, Armenian, Ossetian and Abkhazian languages through the National Standardized University Entrance Examinations as follows: 5 per cent for Azeri speaking students, 5 per cent for Armenian speaking students, 1 per cent for Abkhaz speaking students, and 1 per cent for Ossetian speaking students out of the total available seats at any institution approved by the National Centre of Education Accreditation. Also it made flexible the redistribution of the percentage of students among higher education institutions based on relevant decisions approved by the Ministry of Education and Science: Such decisions can be made within the limits of the total sum in accordance to the number of Azeri and Armenian language speaking students and their test results for a specific year.

It was also established that the above mentioned quotas of seats reserved for students taking general skill tests in Azeri, Armenian, Ossetian and Abkhazian languages do not include the number of seats available for the higher academic and certified specialist programme/s.

The new initiative establishes a Georgian language study programme in accredited and newly established and licensed higher education institutions that receive students based on tests taken in general skills in Azeri, Armenian, Ossetian and Abkhazian languages. The study program is designed for Georgian citizens to acquire the level of knowledge and skills in the Georgian language (writing, read-

ing, listening, speaking) that is necessary to proceed with their studies in bachelor, certified doctor/dentist/veterinarian or certified specialist programmes. Accordingly, the preparatory programme in the Georgian language empowers participants with the necessary knowledge and skills to obtain a higher education in the Georgian language.

After finalizing the Georgian language preparatory study programme and being admitted to a higher education institution based on the general skills test taken in Azeri, Armenian, Ossetian and Abkhazian languages, students are obliged to proceed with their bachelor degree studies or certified doctor/dentist/veterinarian specialist programme in Georgian and receive the necessary amount of credit established by the law for the relevant study programme.

All Georgian higher education institutions as legal entities of public law are obliged to grant admission to students taking only general skills tests in Azeri, Armenian, Ossetian and Abkhaz languages based on their results with the precondition that they will take the preparatory course in the Georgian language.

The amendment also established the responsibility of the Georgian government to decide upon the volume of state financial support through educational grants and the amount to be allotted to students undergoing the preparatory study programme in the Georgian language.

Students who graduate from the one-year preparatory study programme in the Georgian language have the right to continue their studies in bachelor, certified doctor/dentist, veterinarian or certified specialist programme only in the Georgian language. The preparatory study programme in Georgian is obligatory for the first year and is worth 60 academic credits. Higher education institutions issue certificates of attendance upon completion of the preparatory study programme.

Before the academic year 2012-2013, the Ministry of Education and Science must provide accreditation to the preparatory study programmes in Georgian. Higher education institutions are obliged to gain accreditation

for preparatory study programmes by academic year 2012-2013. Until the first round of accreditation of the preparatory programme is implemented, already existing preparatory programmes in Georgian in accredited and newly established certified higher education institutions are considered valid.

Also, students who finalized their preparatory study programmes in Georgian and are planning to apply for creative or sport study programmes through taking general skills tests in the Azeri, Armenian, Ossetian and Abkhazian languages, are obliged to participate in a relevant competition before taking the National Standardized Entrance Exams as established by the relevant institution.

Teachers' certification and professional development

On 4 December 2009, decree of the minister of education and science #1101 approved the statute for Teacher Certification that establishes the terms for conducting teacher certification examinations (certification examinations), acquiring certificates for teaching, issuing certificates, renewing certificates and terminating teacher's licences. According to the statute, the examination programme is based on the National Curriculum plan and established professional standards for teachers. Certification examinations have a combined focus on content and skills. Certification examinations are considered passed when both the content and skills components are passed successfully.

The content part of the certification examinations is organized in following disciplines of the National Curriculum: (a) Georgian language and literature (Abkhaz and Georgian in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia); (b) Mathematics; (c) Social Science: (c.a) History, (c.b) Geography, (c.c) Civic Education; (d) Natural Science: (d.a) Physics, (d.b) Chemistry, (d.c) Biology; (e) Foreign Languages: (e.a) English, (e.b) German, (e.c) French, (e.d) Russian; (f) Physical, vocational and esthetic (f.a) art, (f.b) music, (f.c) physical.

Certification examinations are held in Georgian throughout the country and also in Abk-

haz in Abkhazia. Certification examinations are also held in Russian, Armenian and Azeri languages for teachers that are willing to teach in relevant non-Georgian schools.

A teacher's certificate is valid for eight years. The right to teach is terminated if a teacher does not renew the certificate after eight years. The teacher's certificate is valid for another eight years after renewal.

Until the end of 2014 only those currently employed teachers have the right to take certification examinations who have at least one year experience or have successfully completed a trial period, also those who have minimum one year experience of teaching in educational institution even if they are not employed as teachers at the moment of registration. The teachers discussed in this article are considered to have met all education-related obligations established by Georgian legislation if they pass the certification examinations.

The statute specifies all details related to the procedures of the certification examinations. The first round of the certification examinations will be held in summer 2010, while the deadline for registration is 31 March 2010.

It is important here to establish mechanisms for the financial encouragement of certified teachers, in particular establishing a link between raising the salaries of teachers and their results in the certification examinations.

Introducing Final Examinations in Schools

There is no official written policy document on this issue. The President of Georgia, the Minister of Education and Science and the Director of National Examinations Centre have spoken about this initiative in their public addresses. The aim of the initiative is to attach greater importance to schools and introduce mandatory final examinations by 2011. Final school examinations will be based on existing curricula. On the one hand, the final examinations will serve as a means for receiving a school diploma and proof of minimum competence. On the other hand they

will fulfil the function of competitive examinations in those disciplines which students need in order to apply for university (general skills, English, Georgian language and literature and the fourth chosen from seven optional courses). School diplomas will be issued without final examinations. They will serve as a proof of completing twelve years of study at school, allowing students to proceed with their studies at vocational education institutions.

The number of subjects covered in the final examinations has yet to be determined. According to the president, it should be 10; while the minister has suggested it could be either eight or 10. Experts are currently working on this issue, and at this point it is clear that there will be concrete/specific examinations attached to study programmes and named school final examinations.

The new system will establish tests based on norms as well as criteria. In other words it will be applied to identify a student's compliance with minimum competence standards as well as for comparative purposes (in terms of competition with other students).

Initiatives and planned amendments to curricula and textbooks

The Ministry of Education and Science has presented a number of important initiatives related to school curricula and textbooks. In general terms, these initiatives refer to: (a) improvement and development of the national curriculum for all disciplines taught in grade 12; (b) maintaining new national curriculum plan without amendments for a five-year time period; (c) integration of new disciplines in national curriculum plan: (1) military-patriotic teaching (or civic defence and security); (2) information technologies; (3) world culture; (4) transforming physical education classes into sport classes.

In regard to textbooks the following initiatives were presented: (a) harmonizing school textbooks with the new national curriculum; (b) ensuring transparency in the process of approving textbooks; (c) making the approval process stricter; (d) creating common technical standards for school editions (size, weight,

shape, divisibility, fonts and etc.); (e) permanent monitoring of schools using non-approved textbooks; (f) development of multilingual textbooks while ensuring 30 per cent inclusion of Georgian texts in order to encourage interest toward acquiring Georgian and simplifying the study process.

Risks and threats related to the new initiatives in the context of civic integration

All the initiatives presented above are significant for the general education system in Georgia and for non-Georgian schools in particular, though there are certain risks associated with each of these initiatives which must be considered in order to ensure effective implementation of new reforms and initiatives.

Policy of providing privileges to ethnic minorities in the National Standardized Examinations

The establishment of a system of privileges for ethnic minorities taking the National Standardized Examinations is an important component of minorities' integration process and is considered as one of the most successful initiatives, though the way this policy has been implemented has given rise to certain threats. In particular:

- Abolishing the obligation to take the state language test in order to enter university might result in a worsening of the quality of Georgian language instruction in non-Georgian schools, which already is quite low; or at least discourage activities necessary to improve the teaching of the state language.
- The change might encourage the reverse process – pupils of Georgian schools seeking to be transferred to non-Georgian schools. In this context the problems faced by “the majority being the minority” (for example, an ethnic Georgian in Javakheti) are also important.
- Higher education institutions receiving additional seats for graduates of non-Georgian schools will have financial encour-

agement to maintain these students in future. Accordingly, the threat arises that the one-year Georgian preparatory study programme consisting of 60 credits will be ineffective and higher education institutions will disregard the problem. This threat becomes more real when the Georgian language proficiency test is removed from the entrance examinations, especially since there is no mechanism to ensure the quality of the language study programmes until 2012-2013. There is one more important aspect to look at here: the absolute majority of state higher education institutions either have no experience teaching Georgian as a second language or lecturers with relevant professional training. This might cause the study programme to be of low quality, especially in the absence of a quality control mechanism.

- According to the new initiative, a higher education institution issues certificate to students completing the 60 credit programme, based on which they proceed with their studies in universities in Georgian. The initiative does not stipulate the assessment system based on which certificates are to be issued. There are no established levels of language proficiency in Georgia. In other words it is not determined what level of Georgian language proficiency is necessary for a non-native speaker of Georgian to pursue studies in a higher education institution. Accordingly, certificates issued by higher education institutions cannot be considered an adequate reflection of students' knowledge; students who lack sufficient proficiency in state language might receive the certificate only to face significant problems during their studies as they will not have enough language proficiency to learn their respective academic disciplines. This is extremely important as during entrance exams it is not mandatory for students to demonstrate minimum competence in Georgian. This circumstance creates the theoretical possibility of a student having no proficiency in the state language entering university and having only one year to acquire enough language competence to operate in the academic world. A number of studies and scientific observations indicate that five to eight years are needed to acquire this level of language competence.
- These initiatives are chiefly focused on supporting students from the mainly ethnic Azerbaijani-populated Kvemo Kartli Province and the mainly ethnic Armenian-populated Javakheti region, though its current edition creates space for a large part of the reserved seats to be redistributed among pupils from Tbilisi, Rustavi and Akhaltsikhe (due to the higher level of knowledge and general education in these areas), rather than among those coming from Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli regions. It is important to note that, while the fact that the percentage of reserved seats for these regions is quite high minimizes this threat, the danger does loom in the longer term. Moreover, past patterns and tendencies should also be considered, in particular, the majority of non-Georgian school graduates applying for Georgian higher education institutions have been coming from the regions densely populated by minorities, though most of them have not been taking skills tests in the Azeri and Armenian languages.
- The integration problem is quite significant in Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli. Accordingly it is important to create mechanisms for those obtaining seats via quotas to maintain their ties to the region. Otherwise, despite introducing the system of privileges, there is a possibility that majority of students will not return to their regions, which could preserve the problem of integration and lack of professional staff in the regions.
- As a result of the initiative, there is a possibility that a significant number of students obtaining seats via quotas will be admitted to the top "prestigious" departments, while preserving the lack of professionals in the fields with high demand (for example, high school teachers – non-Georgian schools are already facing lack of teachers that will be worsened throughout coming years). Accordingly, this initiative might not be effective unless additional mechanisms are developed and implemented.
- The policy of providing privileges to students taking examinations in the Ossetian and Abkhaz languages is also important.

But past experience shows that students coming from South Ossetia and Abkhazia are more fluent in Russian rather than Abkhaz or Ossetian. Accordingly, this initiative might cause even the small number of students coming from South Ossetia and Abkhazia to be left out from higher education institutions, as they will not be able to pass general skills tests in the Abkhaz and Ossetian languages. In the short term period, the preparation of tests in Abkhaz and Ossetian might be another obstacle to the initiative. Plus, it is entirely possible that these tests will not be ready by the 2010 National Standardized Exams.

Teachers' certification and professional development

Teachers' certification is important for improving the quality of education in schools. The planned process of certification as one of the most important dimensions of education policy has a number of general flaws, though there are significant issues of civic integration highlighted in this document:

- According to the Ministry of Education and Science, certification is an optional process, but the statute of teachers certification adopted on 4 December 2009 and the law on general education (article 21 point 3 and article 61 point 4) state that currently employed teachers who do not undergo certification exams and do not hold BA degrees will not meet the requirements laid out in Article 21.3 of the Law on General Education and will not be granted the status of a teacher. Accordingly, certification is mandatory to obtain the status of teacher and only timing is optional – teachers can choose when to take the examination in the period between 2010 and 2014.
- The list of certification examinations does not include Azeri, Armenian and Russian languages as native ones, which implies that content examinations will not be carried out for teachers of these disciplines and accordingly they will not be granted the status of teacher. It should be noted that the other initiative introduced by the Ministry of Education and Science of raising salaries based on the results of the

certification examinations will also affect their income. Moreover, the status of a teacher is related to other important social guarantees and teachers of these disciplines will also lose these guarantees. It is also important to note that there are no professional standards for teachers of these disciplines, while teachers' professional standards are initial documents for higher education institutions in developing programmes for future teachers. The absence of professional standards documents might lead higher education institutions not to train teachers in those disciplines in future. This process has already started in Georgian higher education institutions.

- The list of certification examination disciplines does not include Georgian as a second language. But there is curriculum of Georgian as second language for pupils as well as discipline standards for teachers of Georgian as a second language. Unless special amendments are introduced in the current edition of the document, teachers of Georgian as a second language will have to take professional development programmes in teaching Georgian as a native language and even take examinations in Georgian together with those teaching Georgian as a native language. Until recently Georgian was quite unsuccessfully taught based on the curriculum and methods applied in teaching Georgian as native language in regions of Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli. Only recently were teachers trained in methods of teaching Georgian as second language and a relevant curriculum was developed. Accordingly, at this stage it is important to ensure that certification examinations are not held in Georgian as native language, because it may lead to negative results in terms of teaching Georgian in non-Georgian schools.

Introducing Final Examinations in Schools

The introduction of final examinations in schools is one of the most effective ways of integrating non-Georgian schools into the Georgian education system. Non-Georgian schools will apply national curriculum principles and

relevant textbooks in the teaching process, thus enabling their graduates to pass final school examinations. But past difficulties related to curriculum and textbooks might reappear during the final examinations. In particular:

- The process of introducing the new national curriculum and textbooks in non-Georgian schools has been quite slow due to three major factors: (1) the reform process started one year later in these schools; (2) poor translation of textbooks and problems with their timely distribution; (3) high prices on textbooks and availability of textbooks from Armenia and Azerbaijan free of charge.
- Thus non-Georgian schools either began late in applying the new national curriculum and textbooks or have been unable to do so at all (for example, in 2007-2008 only textbooks purchased through social programmes were distributed in schools). Accordingly, final school examinations based on the new national curriculum might become an important challenge in these regions and result in a substantial number of low scores that might create grounds for social protest.
- The test of Georgian as second language during the final examinations might create significant problems. Here two major issues stand out: (a) the state recognizes its failure to provide opportunities for acquiring state language and abolishes the Georgian test in entrance examinations, but at the same time establishes final school examinations for everyone that cannot be considered consistent and may even result in a failure of significant number of pupils in receiving school diploma. (b) Content and format of the examination is also important. Final school examinations should be linked to study programmes when there is absolute uncertainty in regard to teaching Georgian as second language. Quality standards are developed for all 12 grades, implying that pupils will obtain a certain standard of language competence with the precondition that s/he starts learning Georgian as second language from the first year. But students set to finish high school in 2011 and later have not been learning Georgian in accordance with the new study programme starting from their first school year. They have been studying Georgian based on textbook “Tavtavi”, which is not developed based on official study programme and is taught differently considering specifics of different classes, schools, cities or regions. Accordingly, school graduates will not be able to meet even the minimum standards of language competence established by new study programme for twelfth grade students.
- The introduction of the new study programme and textbooks in non-Georgian schools started one year later. Accordingly in 2012 there will be differences between graduates of Georgian and non-Georgian schools as they went through different study programmes in 7-9 year classes and relatively different programme in 10-12 year classes. This difference may have a negative impact on the results of the 2012 final school examinations if it is developed based on a study programme that non-Georgian school graduates are not familiar with.
- According to Article 5, Paragraph 4 of the Law on General Education, in general education institutions where the language of instruction is not Georgian, Georgian history, Georgian geography and other social science disciplines have to be taught in Georgian, and in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia – in Georgian or Abkhaz. Article 58 Paragraph 5 of the same law states that Article 5/4 is to enter into force stage by stage no later than 2010-2011 academic year. As far as the requirements of the law also apply to assessment procedures and final examinations are one of the forms of assessing the studying process, maintaining, this article will oblige graduates of non-Georgian schools to take final examinations in social science disciplines in the state language. Taking social science examinations in state language will create significant challenges for graduates of non-Georgian schools. It is important to mention that this article lays the ground for criticism from other perspectives too.

Initiatives planned in respect to study programmes and textbooks

There are a number of significant changes planned in this respect, but as they have not

passed the stage of general discussion yet, it is difficult to provide analysis of possible risks and threats. General public statements related to this issue have been controversial and contradictory. A group of experts is currently working on the issue and concrete amendments to the national curriculum and textbooks will be introduced in April 2010, thus making it possible to do further analysis. At present the problem related to the lack of teachers of new study programmes seems obvious in relation to non-Georgian schools. Also, based on public statements on these issues, it is possible to draft and propose recommendations that will be presented in the following part of the paper.

Recommendations and proposals for raising effectiveness of the education initiatives in the context of civil integration

These recommendations and proposals are based on analysis of the risks and threats described above and represent a set of measures aimed to prevent them. It should also be mentioned that it is impossible to evade all risks and, accordingly, only the most practical and realistic recommendations are presented.

Policy of providing privileges to ethnic minorities in the Standardized National Entrance Exams

- Providing admission to students in higher education institutions based on general skills tests is a necessary initiative, though it is also important to carry out examinations in the Georgian language in order to identify minimal language competence. This examination can be carried out in the framework of final school examinations, but different minimum requirements for graduating from high schools and entering university should be identified. Passing these tests should be prerequisite for allowing pupils to apply for university entrance examinations. Only pupils who have successfully passed Georgian language competence level tests established by Coun-

cil of Europe (no more than one level) will be given permission to take general skills tests and be considered for internal competition for spots at a higher education institution. Here the counterargument presented by the Ministry of Education and Science should also be considered. They argue that even the competence test can become an obstacle for students and thus undermine the general idea of the initiative; at the same time it is impossible to avoid administering the Georgian language test in the framework of final school examinations. Accordingly, it is important that the tests are designed based on the language competence levels established by Council of Europe (establishing minimum requirement as the first level) rather than attaching it to the current study programme. Moreover, different scientific studies argue that 5 to 8 years are necessary to acquire sufficient language competence to be able to follow the learning process at higher education institutions. Accordingly, only one year of classes in the Georgian language at higher education institutions will not be sufficient for students.

- It is important to develop a system of different levels for evaluating language competence. In other words, a level of language competence should be identified that will prove students' ability to study in higher education institution in the state language; also, the certificate received after completing the Georgian language programme and the right to continue study in following years should be attached to the standardized test system designed in accordance to language competence levels.
- In order to guarantee the quality of Georgian language study programmes, it is important to establish an accreditation mechanism and certificates should be issued only to students enrolled in accredited programmes and passing a relevant assessment process.
- Quotas should be distributed among different departments, with a significant number redistributed between "regulated" professions and a smaller number for "non-regulated" professions, the latter can be more effectively regulated by the market economy and the employment market.
- The majority of quotas should be distrib-

uted among high school graduates from Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti. Here there is a threat of transferring pupils from Tbilisi schools to regional ones through corrupt or otherwise unseemly deals. It is possible to regulate this risk through motivating schoolchildren and parents to ensure that there are no fictitious pupils from Tbilisi enrolled in their school. In order to evade mass transfer of pupils from Tbilisi to these regions and control the process, it is also possible to require approval from the Ministry of Education and Science for each such case. Establishing control over the drain of pupils from Tbilisi to regions would be simpler than developing a mechanism for ensuring that seats reserved by quotas are not redistributed among Tbilisi, Rustavi and Akhaltsikhe high school graduates.

- Development of a coordination system for ensuring that minority students pursuing their studies with the help of quotas (reserved seats) maintain strong ties to their native regions (and, ideally, ultimately getting employment there) is important.
- It is important to support legal entities of public law – higher education institutions – to develop Georgian language study programmes, train lecturers, design curricula and syllabi, compile study literature. Here, the active involvement of NGOs and international organizations is also important.
- In order to encourage the submission of applications to Georgian higher education institutions it is important to inform the populations of Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli about the quota policy. It is possible to actively involve NGOs and local self government bodies in this process.
- In order to evade discouragement of pupils to study the state language in future, it is important to identify a fixed time-frame for the policy of providing privileges and call it a transition period. The policy of providing privileges should be implemented throughout the transition period and can be applied till 2019, in other words until pupils enrolled in reformed classes organized by a new study programme graduate high school. (Since 2007 first year pupils of non-Georgian schools have been studying under the new programme. They will graduate in 2019).

Teachers' certification and professional development

- It is important to carry out an awareness campaign among non-Georgian school teachers about the certification process. They should be fully informed about the certification process in their native language. Here the role of NGOs and community organizations is extremely important.
- It is important to increase financial support for professional development programmes designed for non-Georgian school teachers and encourage providers working on these issues.
- It is important to include the Armenian and Azeri languages as native languages in the list of disciplines in the teachers' certification statute. This will allow teachers of these disciplines to maintain/gain the status of teachers and receive relevant social guarantees. On the other hand higher education institutions should train future teachers in these disciplines.
- It is important to include Georgian as a second language in the list of disciplines in the teachers' certification statute. This will lay the groundwork (1) for the professional development of Georgian language teachers of non-Georgian schools in terms of teaching Georgian as a second language; (2) for higher education institutions training teachers of Georgian as second language; and (3) for designing tests based on standards for teachers of Georgian as second language.

System of final school examinations

- In order to prevent the emergence of significant challenges for graduates of non-Georgian schools in receiving school diplomas it is important to include reasonable and realistic minimum competence requirements in final school examinations, with due consideration to the problems related to the implementation of new study programme and textbooks.
- It is important that differences between study programmes in Georgian and non-Georgian schools are taken into consideration in the elaboration of the 2012 final school examinations.

- It is important to introduce amendments to the law on general education in order to suspend the application of the requirement for teaching social sciences only in the state language. The timeline should be determined in context with multilingual education reform and the policy of providing privileges in entrance examinations.
- In order to foster intercultural sensitivity and respect towards other cultures among pupils it is important to introduce world culture as a discipline. The discipline should include cultures of ethnic minorities living in Georgia and their role in world culture as well as in development of Georgia.

Initiatives planned in respect to study programmes and textbooks

In relation to this issue, the formulation of concrete recommendations will be possible only after precise analysis of the document. As for more general recommendations, they are as follows:

- It is important to raise civil society's awareness and put maximum emphasis on civic education in non-Georgian schools. Accordingly, significant attention has to be paid to strengthening and implementing the civic education study programme. Though civic defence and security disciplines are also important, in non-Georgian schools civic education has a higher priority and these disciplines should be included in its context.
- It is important to initiate, plan and implement activities to train teachers of military-patriotic teaching, civic defence and security in minority languages.
- In relation to multilingual textbooks it is important to take into consideration past experience rather than blindly follow the 30 per cent threshold for including state language texts in textbooks. Four major experiences have to be mentioned in this context, each of them having positive as well as negative sides: (a) bilingual textbooks; (b) textbooks in the state language with special guidebooks for parents that enable them to help children through the learning process and increase their involvement; (c) single language textbooks (state and native) used interchangeably considering the specifics of class, school and region; (d) bilingual textbooks where application of languages is based on physiological, linguistic and methodological aspects rather than simple mechanic application – these aspects are more important than adhering to certain distribution percentages. In the Georgian context the fourth option seems to be the best possible one, though it is also the most difficult to implement in terms of human and financial resources.

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